AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for providing a search output responsive to a query, comprising:

maintaining a search-routing database;

receiving a query from a user, said query comprising search request data in a plurality of search request fields of predetermined types;

selecting the search request data in at least one of the search request fields;

searching said search-routing database for at least one database identifier, based on the selected search request data;

routing the query to a first database identified by said at least one database identifier and a second database associated with the first database;

searching at least one the second database for database records responsive to the query;

searching an update the second database associated with the at least one database for an update record responsive to the query;

determining whether an indication a delete indicator is made in the update record; and

including in the a search output the records responsive to the query except at least one or more of the database records which correspond to the update record when the delete indicator indication is made in the update record.

2. (cancelled).

3. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the delete indicator indication comprises at least one field of the update record configurable to at least one predefined value.

4. (cancelled)

5. (cancelled)

6. (cancelled)

7. (currently amended) A system for providing a search output responsive to a query, comprising:

a search-routing database;

~~a plurality of~~ one or more first databases, said first databases including database records having database fields;

one or more ~~update~~ second databases associated with the first databases, said ~~update~~ second databases including update records having update database fields;

an input device for receiving the query from a user, the query comprised of search request data in search request fields of predetermined types;

a search router for receiving the query and selecting search request data in at least one of the search request fields, the search router comprising a first search engine configured for searching said search-routing database for one or more database identifiers, each of said one or more database identifiers identifying one or more of the first databases;

a second search engine for searching ~~one or more of the plurality of databases~~ a selected one of the first databases for database records responsive to the query, returning the database records responsive to the query, searching a selected one of the second databases ~~at least one of the update databases associated with the plurality of databases~~ for an update record responsive to the query, returning the update record responsive to the query, and determining whether a delete indicator ~~an indication~~ is made in an update database field of the update record; and

a sorter for generating the responsive records resulting from the search of the selected first and second databases ~~and the at least one update database~~, and including in the search output the records responsive to the query except at least one or more of the database records which correspond to the update record when the delete indicator ~~indication~~ is made in the update database field of the update record.

8. (cancelled)

9. (cancelled)

10. (cancelled)

11. (currently amended) The system of claim 7 ~~10~~, further comprising a table for identifying the ~~at least~~ one or more second ~~update~~ database_s_ associated with the one or more ~~of the plurality of~~ first databases.

12. (currently amended) A method of routing search requests, comprising:

receiving a search request at a receiving server, the receiving server having one or more first databases accessible for searching, the search request comprising search request data in a plurality of search request fields of predetermined types;

selecting search request data in at least one of the search request fields;

searching a routing database for at least one database identifier, based on the selected search request data, to determine whether the search request should be routed to the one or more search databases accessible by the receiving server; and

if it is determined that the search request should be routed to the one or more first databases accessible to the receiving server:

routing the search request to the one or more first databases accessible by the receiving server and one or more second databases associated with the one or more first databases;

searching the one or more first databases accessible to the receiving server and the one or more second databases; and

returning the results of the search.

13. (previously presented) The method of claim 12, wherein the determining includes analyzing the search request to identify one or more items of routing data.

14. (currently amended) The method of claim 12 further comprising routing the search request to a second server if it is determined that the search request should not be routed to the

<u>first</u> databases accessible by the receiving server.

15. (previously presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said second server is remotely located from the receiving server.

16. (currently amended) The method of claim 12, <u>wherein the one or more second databases comprise</u> ~~further comprising routing the search request to an update database having~~ a plurality of records for updating <u>the</u> one or more ~~of the~~ <u>first</u> databases.

17. (currently amended) The method of claim 16, further comprising merging the search results returned from the <u>first</u> databases with the search results returned from the ~~update~~ <u>one or more second</u> database<u>s</u>.

18. (previously presented) The method of claim 14, further comprising routing the search request to the one or more databases accessible by said second server.

19. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, further comprising returning to the receiving server the results of the search obtained in response to the routing of the search request to the one or more databases accessible by said second server.

20. (currently amended) A system for routing search requests comprising:

an input device for receiving a search request<u>, the search request comprising search request data in a plurality of search request fields of predetermined types</u>; and

a receiving server having one or more <u>first</u> databases accessible for searching,

wherein the receiving server is capable of searching a routing database <u>for at least one database identifier based on search request data selected from at least one of the search request fields</u> to determine whether the search request should be routed to the one or more <u>first</u> databases accessible by the receiving server, and routing the search request to the one or more <u>first</u> databases accessible by the receiving server <u>and to one or more second databases associated</u>

with the one or more first databases, if it is determined that the search request should be routed to the one or more first databases accessible by the receiving server.

21. (previously presented) The system of claim 20, wherein the receiving server determines said search request routing by analyzing the search request to identify one or more items of routing data.

22. (currently amended) The system of claim 21, wherein the receiving server routes the search request to a second server if it is determined that the search request should not be routed to the first databases accessible by the receiving server.

23. (previously presented) The system of claim 22, wherein the second server is remotely located from the receiving server.

24. (previously presented) The system of claim 22, wherein the second server routes the search request to the one or more databases accessible by the second server.

25. (previously presented) The system of claim 24, wherein the second server returns the results of the search obtained in response to the routing of the search request to the one or more databases accessible by the second server.

26. (currently amended) The system of claim 20, ~~further comprising an update~~ the one or more second databases ~~having~~ comprise a plurality of records for updating the one or more ~~of the~~ first databases.

27. (cancelled).

28. (currently amended) The system of claim 27, wherein the receiving server merges the search results returned from the one or more first databases with the search results returned from

the ~~update~~ second databases.

29. (currently amended) A method of routing search requests comprising:

maintaining a routing database for identifying one or more first databases to search in response to a search request;

receiving the search request, the search request comprising search request data in a plurality of search request fields of predetermined types;

selecting search request data in at least one of the search request fields;

searching the routing database for at least one database identifier, based on the selected search request data, and to determine at least one route to one or more first databases to search in response to the search request;

if the search of the routing database is successful, routing the search request to a first database associated with the at least one database identifier and to a secondary database associated with the first database ~~identified by the routing database~~; and

in other instances, routing the search request to a second database identified by one or more default routes.

30. (previously presented) The method of claim 29, further comprising analyzing the search request to identify one or more items of routing data.

31. (currently amended) The method of claim 30, further comprising searching a routing database with the identified one or more items of routing data to identify ~~one or more~~ at least one of the first databases to which the search request should be routed.

32. (currently amended) The method of claim 29, wherein the routing databases identifies at least one route to ~~one or more database~~ at least one of the first databases that are appropriate to search in response to the search request.

33. (currently amended) The method of claim 29, wherein the search request is routed to a

~~database~~ at least one of the first databases identified by the one or more default routes if the search request does not include a field that is used for routing.

34. (currently amended) The method of claim 29, wherein the search request is routed to ~~a~~ ~~database~~ at least one of the first databases identified by the one or more default routes if the search request includes a field that is used for routing but the field has an unspecified value.

35. (currently amended) The method of claim 29, wherein the search request is routed to ~~a~~ ~~database~~ at least one of the first databases identified by the one or more default routes if the search request includes a field that is used for routing but the data populating the field does not correspond to any entries in the routing databases.